

MINUTES
Advisory Board to
Memphis Animal Services

FEBRUARY 10, 2010

Present were:

Board Members:

Cindy Sanders
Michelle Buckalew
Allen Iskiwitz
Carol Katz
Jackie Johns
Frank James
Janet Hooks, Ex-Officio

Michelle Buckalew called the meeting to order at Central Library at 1:15 p.m.

Minutes of the January meeting were approved.

Janet announced that the MAS Advisory Board will have a link on the city's website. The link will allow the public to contact the board with their issues.

Agenda Item 1: Benefits of GPS Systems

Cindy said that she and Jackie had been looking at the benefits of having GPS systems on the vans that would coordinate with the Chameleon system now being used at the shelter. She stated that MAS is more than a kennel – it is engaged in law enforcement, animal cruelty investigations and corralling stray animals. She reported that Nashville increased its response rate from 70 percent to 90 percent. It involves safety, productivity and accountability issues. MAS is routinely behind on its calls. At \$50 installation per vehicle, Cindy felt this would be a small cost for a big return.

Janet said that the police department currently does not have GPS. Cindy said the police union opposes putting GPS in the police department. MAS is a much smaller unit. Janet said the city council has to look at funding for the every department. The ACOs are required to have continual contact with dispatch so that MAS knows where they are at all times. That element is already in place. Cindy said that it is a

relatively small amount and could be provided by citizens if funding is not available through the city. Allen asked if we can fund privately we could bypass the union. Janet said that even if funds were raised, the union would weigh in on the issue.

Agenda Item #2: Missing Animals

Cindy asked about data on missing animals. It should be available through Chameleon system. Cindy said as of November we had 35 to 40 missing animals that didn't fall into any of the categories. Intake stats do not match the animals leaving through disposal stats. Janet said that the MAS kennel stats through December that are now in legal department and will be sent to you, as requested, show only one animal unaccounted for. We are checking the Chameleon system to try to find out what happened to that animal.

Janet said Saturday, February 13; MAS will have an adoption event at the shelter. Our new administrator, Matthew Pepper will be at the shelter that day. Volunteers and staff have been working hard to assure healthy animals are adopted out. We will be using bar coding in future. Laptops will be used at the shelter to make notations of cage moves, etc.

Allen asked when MAS would restart the off-site adoption program. Janet expected that would happen in late March. Allen said that intact animals could be sent to off-site adoption facilities in order to get as many as possible before the public as long as they were returned to the shelter for spaying or neutering prior to their release to the adopting person. The animals could be paid for off-site and the adopting person picks the animal up at the shelter post-surgery. Janet said that MAS policy requires animals to be spayed/neutered prior to release. However, some exceptions can occur. For this particular event, she said that we are trying to have the animals spayed/neutered prior to event. Allen asked if it was still MAS policy that any intact animals that were adopted went back to the shelter for spay/neuter and the adopting person picked them up post-surgery. Janet verified that this was the case.

Michelle discussed advisability of setting up tents outside MAS for the adoption. Balloons, tents, etc. all attract attention. Janet said if weather permits, we will have it outside, but it may be too cold. Michelle said a company in Bartlett offered to have heat provided for tents. Michelle also stressed the importance of off-site adoptions that gets adoptable animals out to the public.

Agenda Item #3: Inventory of ACO's Equipment

Jackie requested information on what type of equipment the ACO's have with them. Cameras, flashlights, dog poles, etc. are required for the job. Is there an inventory system? Janet said she asked the supervisors to determine what standard equipment is needed and what is actually available to ACOs. Janet said an inventory is being done at present. We will know by Friday if anything is needed. Jackie said that cruelty investigations absolutely must be photographed. Frank said that Ernie Alexander purchased cameras. Janet said every animal is photographed upon intake. Jackie said that the goal is to have fully equipped vans.

Janet said the web site for the shelter is still under construction. MAS photographs will be shown on Pet Harbor. Jeanne Chancellor has been posting the web photos on Community Web Shots and that has ceased. Michelle said that Community Web Shots is not the preferable way to go. Petfinder is preferable, in her opinion. Janet said we want make sure that adoptable animals are on multiple sites, but MAS needs to control this function. Carol asked whether the Chameleon system could be utilized for this purpose, showing adoptable animals and strays as well. Janet agreed that is and will be utilized. Michelle said that other shelters present the animals in a much more appealing fashion, rather than dogs looking through bars, terrified.

Agenda Item #4: Abandoned Animals

Jackie said that she received an email regarding renters having moved out and the animals left behind. The animals were taken by MAS ACOs, but no cruelty citations were issued. Janet said that not only was the landlord looking for these tenants, the property management company was as well. Under these circumstances, the person cannot be found but an attempt had been made. In an eviction, there is no paper trail to trace these people. Cindy said that it is presently before the legislature in Nashville to cite persons for animal cruelty when such persons leave an animal behind, so a citation should issue in any case.

Jackie said that the entire Advisory Board does not have access to the Advisory Board web site. (At this point in time, only Michelle had access.) Cindy said it gives the public the impression that they are contacting only the Advisory Board, but the city administration as well. Also, responses are not necessarily coming from the board or board members. Janet said that this actually allows Dr. Hall or myself to give a response to the citizen who knows from whom the response came. Michelle said that it is progress that we have an Advisory Board, we have web cams, we have a new director, and we thank Director Hooks for all her effort. How we treat our animals directly reflects on our community. Cindy said that Director Hooks

did not walk into an easy situation. However, Cindy said she has a problem with a web site that says a citizen has contact with the Advisory Board but it is actually going to the administration. Cindy said there should be two options to citizens: access to the administration and the advisory board. Carol asked why each Advisory Board member's email is not posted there on the web site, and felt the entire board should have access. Janet said individual email addresses could be posted. The board agreed to furnish their email addresses. Janet said that once Mr. Pepper comes on board, he would also have access and response capability.

Michelle said that according to the two-year tenure of the board some of us will be leaving in June. Allen said that the two-year tenure was not absolute. Janet said that it was a two-year term with expiration date certain, but the Mayor may reappoint or appoint someone else.

Michelle reminded us that at the last month's meeting we recommended to the Mayor and City Council that there be a Kennel Operations Manager appointed. Michelle said that with the new director coming in, we did not want to undercut what the new director may want to do. Janet said that she has also requested this position from the city council but the council will not hear it until two weeks hence. Carol thought that our recommendation would bolster the city council approval of it. If Janet is pursuing this, then the board should voice their concern as well. Janet thought it definitely would help the cause for the Advisory Board to support the cause. The board voted that a letter be sent to Harold Collins, Chairman, Memphis City Council, 125 North Main, 5th floor, Memphis, TN 38103. A copy of the letter will also be sent to Mayor AC Wharton (same address, 7th floor). Carol urged that the letter go out as soon as possible and it was agreed by the board to do this in advance of Mr. Pepper coming in.

Michelle asked about any other issues coming before the council that the board may be interested in. Janet advised that the breed specific spay/neuter ordinance, sponsored by Shea Flynn, has been put on hold for 30 days.

Agenda Item #5: MAS Response to Emergency Situations Occurring at the Shelter

Allen was concerned about a situation where puppies were born when there was no one being present at the shelter.

Agenda Item #6: Paying with Credit Card

Allen said the present adoption situation is a cash only basis. Janet said that they are currently looking at this and something should be set up for credit card payment within 60 days. Allen asked whether the city would consider a fee reduction for the rescue groups. Janet said that we have that latitude and do so on a case-by-case basis. However, we will retain the policy that rescue groups must pay the fees. But we work to get the dogs adopted and we work with the rescue groups. The fees this weekend for the adoption event are 1/2 price. Fees are set according to expenses recognized in running the shelter.

Janet expressed her confidence in the new Administrator of the shelter that has been chosen. He will start March 1. Janet also introduced her new deputy director, Dr. La Sonya Hall. Janet displayed a Policy & Procedure Manual that Mr. Pepper had been instrumental in creating for Caddo Parish. Michelle expressed the hope that with the transparency of Mayor Wharton's administration, Mr. Perry will be able to interact with media outlets and the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m. Public comments followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Smith Katz, Secretary

Jan Courtney presented a notebook of pictures showing shelter employees spraying down cages with high power hose. She referenced USHS policy of removing animals from cages prior to cleaning. Michelle expressed her desire that the new Administrator will change this procedure in future. Janet said that the pictures do not show that there is an animal in the kennel. Janet said that the shelter is trying to do a massive sanitizing of the entire kennel.

Lynn Myers thanked the administration for the cameras that are important to assuring accountability. She said that the photos do indeed show that dogs are in cages being hosed. Janet said they would look at procedures currently in place. She also asked whether MAS investigated cruelty to horses. The answer was yes.

Beverly King said that she would take on the GPS project and raise the \$2,500 needed to put a GPS on every MAS van.